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Hong Kong: A Geographic Brief

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A Research Paper

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Hong Kong: A Geographic Brief

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A Research Paper

*Information available as of 1 September 1983
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This paper was prepared by [] Office
of Global Issues. Comments and queries are welcome
and may be directed to the Chief, Geography
Division, OGI, on []

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Distribution of Population

Hong Kong's well-educated population includes a large number of people who have already fled Beijing's control at least once and who could attempt to do so again in the face of imminent takeover by China. The Colony's population as of mid-1983 was estimated at 5.3 million. Almost all of these people are of ethnic Chinese origin. More than 55 percent were born in Hong Kong, 40 percent in China, and the remainder in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Only about 21,000 persons were born in the United Kingdom—less than one-half of 1 percent of the total. American-born individuals number fewer than 7,000 (see chart).

Of the estimated 4.16 million Hong Kong residents who have completed some course of education, more than 30 percent have gone beyond the lower secondary level (nine years) to acquire advanced training. Some 1 million have completed three to five additional years at regular or technical schools or in apprenticeship programs. An additional 270,000 have earned degrees or certificates from universities, colleges, or technical institutes.

Hong Kong Island and Kowloon house 40 percent of the population on less than 10 percent of the Colony's land area. Another one-third of the population lives in

heavily urbanized New Kowloon, the area immediately north of Boundary Street—the dividing line between the ceded and leased areas—and extending from beyond the Kwun Tong subway terminus to the Kwai Chung Container Terminal. Of the remainder of the population, nearly three-fourths are concentrated in six "new towns" in the New Territories (see chart).

The concentration of population in a small part of the Colony results in severe crowding. Although Hong Kong's average population density is similar to that of Chicago and Philadelphia—about 5,000 persons per square kilometer—when the rural areas in the New Territories are disregarded, population density comes closer to the 25,000 persons per square kilometer found in New York's Manhattan Borough. In the most heavily settled districts, density exceeds 100,000 persons per square kilometer. This extreme congestion has been brought about largely through the construction of massive housing developments consisting of multistoried apartment blocks (see photo 5). Suburbs reach skyward in Hong Kong instead of spreading over the landscape—the direct result of there being little suitable land available for building.

Hong Kong Population Distribution, 1981

Percent

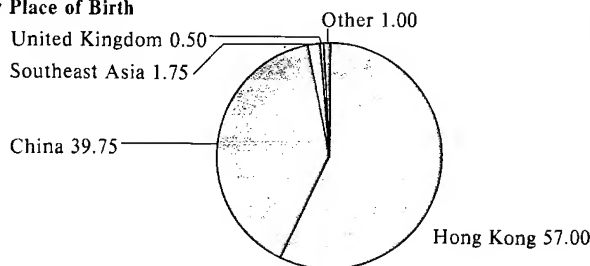
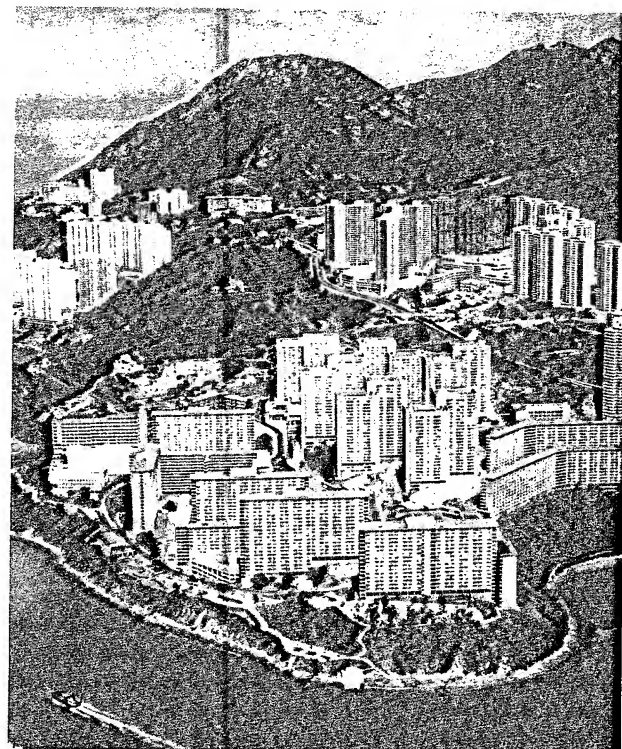
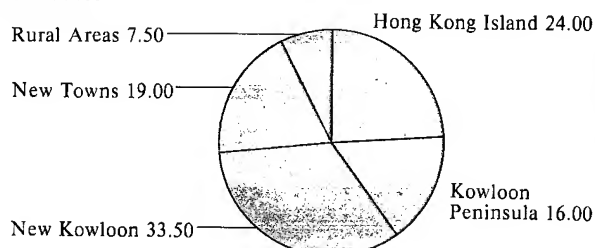
By Place of Birth**By Residence**

Photo 5. Hong Kong's largest public-housing estate—Wah Fu on Hong Kong Island

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